

IPSO Annual Statement for 2019/20

Introduction

ACT Publishing Ltd is a small privately-owned Trade & Technical horticultural publishing company founded in 1984.

Three monthly trade publications and five yearbooks are produced primarily for the UK horticulture industry. The monthly publications include: The Commercial Greenhouse Grower, established in 1995 with a circulation directed at protected ornamental and salad crop growers. The Vegetable Farmer est. 1990, directed at commercial growers of field vegetables and potatoes, and The Fruit Grower est. 1984, directed at commercial top and soft fruit and vine growers. All three titles are distributed principally to a UK readership on a controlled and paid for subscription basis, although there is a proportion of overseas circulation involved with all three titles.

The yearbooks include The Potato Yearbook, The Berry Yearbook, The Vegetable Yearbook, the Greenhouse Yearbook and the Vine Growers Yearbook. These titles are similarly circulated to commercial growers of these crops and companies who sell products and services to them.

Each publication has an experienced manager who is responsible for commissioning editorial from journalists, generating appropriate advertising and overseeing production. The responsible manager for The Fruit Grower is Chris Tanton (since 2001); The Vegetable Farmer, John Jarrett (since 2019); and Commercial Greenhouse Grower, John Downey (since 2013). The Yearbook manager is Debbie Alpe.

We also publish news stories on our website www.hortnews.com and produce HortNews a monthly e-newsletter. These are controlled by Leah Grant who has been with ACT for around 10 years.

Total staff as at 2020 comprises three full time plus five part-time members.

Editorial

All editorial is provided by freelance journalists or occasionally specialist horticultural PR firms. The majority of the journalists we use are either members of The Guild of Agricultural Journalists or NUJ and have particular academic qualifications or working knowledge that enables them to provide technical material that resonates with a knowledgeable readership.

Complaints regarding editorial issues are extremely rare and usually concern editorial mistakes like misspelling of names, incorrect dates, wrongly captioned photographs and such like rather than objections to content. Should a reader have any issue with content we are happy to be informed by telephone, email or post. The matter is then referred to the journalist involved. In the event of the journalist informing our Publisher and title manager that an error has been agreed, ACT Publishing would under most circumstances publish an apology and correction in the next available issue.

We expect commissioned journalists to operate within the guidelines of the writer organisations that they may belong to, and we are happy to offer financial help for any training offered by those organisations.

Journalists are provided with ACT Publishing's 'Guidelines for Editorial Contributors' (attached) which reiterates the need for journalists to check with sources to eliminate factual errors and consider any legal implications that could be raised within the material to be published.

We understand also that IPSO offers pre-publication guidance. ACT Publishing has not yet sought pre-publication guidance from IPSO, however we would do so if we needed advice on interpreting the Editors' Code of Practice or the public interest exception.

The new version of the Editor's Code (issued 1st July 2019) has been circulated to all staff at ACT who have any dealings with editorial content – either in our magazines, yearbooks or on-line. We have also circulated it to all our editorial contributors.

Compliance

There have been no known instances of complaints against ACT Publishing Ltd which have been ruled on by IPSO's complaints committee.

The responsible person/contact at ACT Publishing is John Downey.